

the industry equally. This conclusion is based on a number of assumptions which have either undergone change already or are not maintainable. The subsidy on urea is the difference between the Retention Price and the Maximum Retail Price, which is statutorily notified by the Government. Therefore, the benefit of the subsidy is available to the farmers. There is no subsidy being provided to fertilizer units under the Retention Price Scheme. These units are being provided 12% post-tax return on their net-worth besides reimbursement of cost of production. It is true that the cost of production of urea in India, *vis-a-vis* many other countries, is often high on account of higher cost of raw materials in India *viz.* gas, naphtha, fuel oil/low sulphur heavy stocks etc. The purchase of indigenous urea from high cost domestic units is being done out of the over-riding consideration of ensuring self-sufficiency in nitrogenous fertilizers in the country.

Increase in prices of life saving drugs

3843. SHRI C.O. POULOSE: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

- (a) the rate of increase in prices of life saving drugs for the last three years, year-wise, for each brand of drug, separately;
- (b) the demand and supply position; and
- (c) the steps taken to increase the supply position?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI SUKHDEV SINGH DHINDSA): (a) Drugs (Prices Control) Order, 1995 does not make any distinction between life saving drugs and other drugs. Life saving nature of a drug depends upon a particular situation and circumstances. During the period 1997-98 and 1999-2000, the prices of drugs and medicines, as measured by the wholesale price index (base 1993-94 = 100) has increased by 49.03%.

- (b) There are no reports of imbalance between the Demand and Supply of Drugs in the country. However, whenever shortages are

reported, the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority takes necessary corrective measures.

(c) The Drug Policy, as amended from time to time, is directed towards ensuring abundant availability of quality drugs at reasonable prices.

Outstanding loans against fertilizer companies

3844. SHRI K.M. KHAN: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) what are the details of loans outstanding against each of the fertilizer producing companies;

(b) whether the interest and the penal interest due on these outstanding loans were written off;

(c) if so, the company-wise details thereof; and

(d) what are the details regarding amounts of subsidy provided by Government on fertilizers during the last three years till date, year-wise?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI SUKHDEV SINGH DHINDSA): (a) The details of Government of India Plan and Non-Plan loans outstanding as on 31.3.2000 in respect of fertilizer Public Sector Undertakings/